Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

- 1. (Cancelled)
- 2. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claim 118, wherein the optical network is arranged in a manner such that, in use, the management function is being effected on a computer located within a network element of the optical network.
- 3. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claims 1 18 or 2, wherein the management function comprises the distribution of one or more of the a group consisting of alarm reports, audit logs, alarm logs, and status reports.
- 4. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claim 118, wherein the optical network is arranged in a manner such that, in use, the management function is being effected via email messages transmitted using the standard TCP/IP protocols.
- 5. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claim 118, wherein the optical network may be is arranged in a manner such that, in use, the management function is being effected via an HTTP server incorporated in the a network element and accessible via a conventional web browser.

6. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claim ± 2 , wherein the network element comprises a network node or an inline amplifier.

7. (Cancelled)

- 8. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 7 19, wherein the management function is being effected on a computer located within a network element of the optical network.
- 9. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claims 7 or 19 or 8, wherein the management function comprises the distribution of one or more of the a group consisting of alarm reports, audit logs, alarm logs, and status reports.
- 10. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 7—19, wherein the management function is being effected via e-mail messages transmitted using standard TCP/IP protocols.
- 11. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim $7-\underline{19}$, wherein the management function is being effected via an HTTP server incorporated in the \underline{a} network element and accessible via a conventional web browser.
- 12. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim $\frac{7-8}{2}$, wherein the network element $\frac{1}{2}$ comprises a network node or an in-line amplifier.

13. (Cancelled)

- 14. (Currently Amended) A network element as claimed in claim $\frac{13-20}{20}$, wherein the means for communicating comprises an SMTP server application.
- 15. (Currently Amended) A network element as claimed in claims $\frac{13}{20}$ or 14, wherein the means for communicating may comprises an HTTP server application.
- 16. (Currently Amended) A network element as claimed in claim 13—20, wherein the management function comprises the distribution of one or more of the a group consisting of alarm reports, audit logs, alarm logs, and status reports.
- 17. (Currently Amended) A network element as claimed in claim 13—20, wherein the network element is in the form of a network node or an in-line amplifier.
- 18. (New) An optical Wavelength Division Multiplexing (WDM) network arranged in a manner such that at least management of an optical-electrical-optical switch structure in the optical network is effected utilising TCP/IP communication protocols.
- 19. (New) A method of managing an optical WDM network, the method comprising the step of effecting at least management of an optical-electrical-optical switch structure of the optical network utilising TCP/IP communication protocols.
- 20. (New) A WDM network element for use in an optical WDM network, the WDM network element comprising

an optical-electrical-optical switch structure; and a communication unit for communicating using TCP/IP protocols to effect at least management of the optical-electrical-optical switch structure.